SINGLE SUCCESS PUZZLES DEEP PURPLE

TWO years after getting their first American hit, Deep Purple have finally broken the British singles market. Though the group has scored with albums here, the singles haven't done well at all and that's rather puzzling. Why has it taken so long for them to get one away at home?

DEEP PURPLE as they appeared on London Weekend's "South Bank Summer" TV show discussed in this feature by Ian Paice.

3 months to make chart, but now, by leaping 15 places it's the week's fastest climber

By RICHARD GREEN

Drummer Ian Paice thinks he has the answer, though he admits to being puzzled about the length of time it took "Black Night" to enter the chart. And curiously, having done so, it leapt up 15 places this week making it the fastest climber.

"'Hush' was the first release of the new company in America and they really went to town on it," he pointed out. "We haven't made good enough records here, that's all.

"Singles aren't really important, they're an asset, but not the first thing I'd jump at. A hit single might push our price up by a hundred pounds but that's nothing when it's split between the group because it all gets eaten up. It might make the billing a bit better.

"It's as confusing to us as to everybody else why this single was so slow selling. It was released at the same time as the album — that was at the beginning of July — and we gave it six weeks and thought it was finished. We went to America and thought it was another Purple miss in a long line of flops but we got a 'Top Of The Pops' on it while we were away and a lot of plugs and that was it."

Record-wise, Deep Purple are known primarily as an album group and the rock LP has done a lot of business. But as Jon Lord said a few weeks ago, the album was needed to re-establish Purple's true identity. The classical concerts and resultant album backfired somewhat.

"It's too much heartache getting all that together for one night," Ian commented. "Richie was the main instigator of the rock album, pushing it, and I tend to agree with him. You have no freedom doing a classical concert, you just have to watch the bars and I'm not a bars man.

"We wanted to get across what we were doing all the time. We got so much publicity for the classical thing that people expected us to turn up with a ninety-piece orchestra on every gig.

"At one place we played, they had us billed with something like the Snodgrass Silver Band. They went on for forty minutes boring everyone to death . . . we didn't even play with them. The whole thing was terrible."

On the last two occasions that I've seen Deep Purple — the Plumpton festival and "South Bank Summer" on TV — a fair amount of equipment wrecking has taken place. I asked Ian if he didn't think this was getting out of hand.

"It's not really wrecking," he replied. "I bought that kit when I was seventeen and I've had it seven years now. If I felt bad I'd boot it even in those days, it's not a question of 'now I can afford to do it so I will.'

"Plumpton was getting a bit lethargic so we needed to do something. The 'South Bank Summer' was getting on everyone's nerves, I had a camera almost up my nose and I just hit the kit, by which time Richie had hooked his amp over. It's a primitive release I suppose."

In Germany, however, Deep Purple adopt a different attitude to knocking things about bit.

"You put a lot more violence in your playing there or the audience get violent and it's much better for us to get violent than for them to," he said with the tone of someone who has seen our German friends get out of hand.

Quieter

Ian was in a slightly quieter mood than I usually find him at night when we frequent the same club. He was relaxed in a chair and smiling rather than raving and taking things seriously as opposed to letting events take hold of him. While he was keeping an even keel, I asked him about America where Deep Purple are very popular.

"I don't think we're bigger there than here now. On the first two tours we earned a lot of bread and spent it all here, so you're back at zero, it's like you haven't done anything.

"We left it a long time before going back. The classical thing never got big over there fortunately. We do colleges and universities and a couple of big ballrooms, there's no club scene where groups can play," he told me.

Of American acts, he said: "They're not of a very high standard, the average is pretty low, with the exception of people like Chicago and Blood, Sweat and Tears. British bands are more inventive but it doesn't follow that they're better musically.

"I always play better in America than here because I've got to — there's a lot more individual competition, you can never afford to relax. There just isn't that much competition here.

"I don't mean that in a conceited way, it's just that people tend to go on the sound of the band here. You're not trying to blow each other off in America, it's just a thing between you and the audience and the other guy.

"The group plays as well here as it does in America, there's always that little feeling that you're playing at home and this tends to lead to an effort whether you're conscious of it or not."

With all the success of the group it would seem sane to assume that everyone concerned is feeling satisfied. Not so Ian.

"I'm not content yet, no," Ian admitted. "I'm having a good time now but I want a better time. I dunno what I want to do. Maybe if I did I'd have a better time. I'd like the band to get a lot bigger because it's worth it."

YOUNG BLOOD

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by Alexis Korner